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ABSTRACT

Three valuable approaches to utilize in improving the social studies curriculum may be to develop resource units, teaching units, and lesson plans. Resource units contain a collection of more objectives, learning activities, evaluation techniques, and bibliographical entries than can possibly be used by a given teacher for a particular classroom of pupils. Developing good teaching units should help to improve the social studies curriculum. A teaching unit generally pertains to planning for instructing a specific class of pupils for an entire unit. Guidelines for developing the appropriate section of a teaching unit may include: (1) specific objectives; (2) pretesting of pupils; (3) possible revision of objectives; (4) learning activities to realize objectives; and (5) evaluation to determine if objectives have been realized. A carefully developed lesson plan for each day in teaching social studies can do much to improve the curriculum. Such a plan should encompass specific objectives, learning activities, and evaluation techniques. It is important to teach units in depth rather than use the survey approach. Teachers, supervisors, and administrators should select eight or nine units to be taught in a given school year in the intermediate grade levels. Problems for consideration and discussion are included. (Contains 13 references.) (LBG)

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RESOURCE UNITS, TEACHING UNITS, AND LESSON PLANS

Three valuable approaches to utilize in improving the social studies curriculum may be the developing of resource units, teaching units, and lesson plans. The resource unit will be discussed first since it contains many important suggestions for developing teaching units and lesson plans.

McNeil [7] wrote:

> The Unit. There are two kinds of units: the resource unit and the teaching unit. The difference between the two lies in how closely the recommended practices are tailored for particular learners. The resource unit is a guide for teaching a potential and general population of learners. The teaching unit is developed for known individuals. Both units have the same components: rationale (justification for the unit presented as an overview), goals, objectives, topics, activities, and materials.
>
> The unit's length is usually from two to six weeks and the body of the document includes activities to introduce the major topics and to prepare for the activities that will follow. Problems, demonstrations, and guest speakers are common initiating activites. Developmental activities comprise the major portion of the unit. In these activities, students interact with the content, raising and formulating questions, collecting data, and trying to resolve the initially proposed problem.

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[7] John D. McNeil. Curriculum - A Comprehensive Introduction. Third Edition. Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown, and Company, 1985, page 146.

The Resource Unit

Resource units contain a collection of more objectives, more learning activities, more evaluation techniques, and more bibliography entries than can possibly be used by a given teacher for a particular classroom of pupils. A teacher can then select those objectives, from among many, which a given classroom of pupils needs to achieve. The teacher can also select, from among many, the learning activities and evaluation techniques which would be appropriate to use with a given class of pupils. Not all pupils, of course, learn equally well from a certain learning activity; variety in learning activities is important to provide for individual differences. Thus, a pupil who reads poorly can learn much in social studies through other learning activities such as viewing and discussing films, filmstrips, slides, and pictures. With many kinds of learning activities available in elementary school social studies, each pupil may be guided to realize optimum development.

Resource units may be developed cooperatively by teachers of a particular grade level within an elementary school or several elementary schools. The elementary school principal and elementary school supervisor should also be involved in developing resource units in leadership capacities. A resource unit may be used on more than one specific grade level. Thus, first and second grade teachers within an elementary school, for example, cooperatively could develop resource units. As a further example, fifth and sixth grade teachers could work together in a similar capacity. Through cooperative efforts in developing resource units, teachers, principals, and supervisors learn

much from each other in developing the curriculum. Ideas are thus shared and evaluated in a group situation.

Welton and Mallan [8] wrote:

> The intent of all planning is to determine what students should do, and then to identify courses of action that will permit them to do it. The result of a teacher's planning--their unit or lesson--typically consists of a series of learning experiences that have a common theme or focus. Sometimes that theme is phrased as a question, such as "How do people manipulate the behavior of others?" More typically, the activities and experiences deal with selected aspects of a topic: "transportation," "community helpers," "life in Colonial America," etc.
>
> Unit teaching, which is the practice of organizing instruction around selected themes, questions, and topics, is such a well-entrenched practice that the terminology should be familiar. The units you experienced as students were, as the term implies, a series of learning activities and experiences related to a common focus. As students, you were on the receiving end of a teaching unit. What you experienced were the activities and materials that your teachers used with your class. Your teacher, however, may have selected those activities and materials from a larger, more encompassing resource unit. A resource unit is a planning aid that teachers' develop for themselves and that includes possible learning activities, materials to support those activities (lists of films, filmstrips, and other teaching aids and resources), as well as references or background material.

Several formats are available in the development of resource units. They have, however, much in common as to the essential parts. The following outline of the different parts should be helpful to the reader:

I. The title and grade level or approximate grade level

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[8] David A. Welton and John T. Mallan, Children and Their World: Strategies for Teaching Social Studies. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1988, pages 136 and 137.

II. Justification for teaching the unit
III. The objectives of the unit
IV. Possible questions and problems for pupils to solve
V. Learning activities for pupils
    A. Initiating the unit
    B. Developing the unit
    C. Culminating or ending the unit
VI. Evaluating the achievement of pupils
VII. The bibliography section
    A. Teacher's bibliography
    B. Pupil's bibliography

Each of the above named parts of a resource unit will now be discussed.

1. The title and grade level or approximate grade level. With the explosion of knowledge in American society, there is much to be learned by pupils. Units taught to pupils should be selected carefully. Content learned in the unit should be on the understanding level of pupils. Pupils should develop and/or maintain a high degree of interest when being actively involved in gaining important understandings, skills, and attitudes from a particular unit. From the learner's point of view, purposes need to exist for studying each particular social studies unit. Titles and content of social studies units should assist learners in developing an inward desire to learn.

2. Justification for teaching the unit. Which units in elementary social studies should be taught? A vast amount of knowledge exists in the different areas of the social sciences which include history, geography, political science, anthropology, sociology, and economics. Knowledge in these disciplines, no doubt, will continue to increase at a rapid rate. Teachers of social studies, principals, and supervisors must select with great care units which should be taught to pupils. Units which are taught must have ample justification. For example,

supposing a unit pertaining to "Living on the Farm" is selected after careful deliberation to be taught on the primary grade level, what values and benefits justify the teaching of this unit? Perhaps, the following statements arrived at cooperatively by those involved in selecting social studies units may justify the teaching of that unit:

Farm life is continually changing. Machines are utilized today to perform work which was formerly done by human muscles. Modern tractors can have power steering just as automobiles do. Very little energy is expended by today's farmer in steering the tractor in making many turns on the field when he/she is plowing, harrowing, or disking the land. The farmer of today has a hydraulic lift on the tractor. He/she pulls a lever backward or forward next to the comfortable seat on the tractor, and the attached plow raises or lowers with almost no human energy involved. When wheat is to be put into a grain bin, the farmer uses a grain auger driven by an electric motor. Shoveling wheat by hand is an outdated practice on a modern farm. A self-propelled combine cuts the wheat in the field, and the wheat is loaded onto the truck with the use of the unloading auger which is attached to the grain bin of the combine. Larger machines are used on farms than ever before. A large tractor today can pull a plow with eight shears whereas a generation ago tractors of that size were not made. A generation ago a tractor pulling a plow with four shears was a large tractor. Thus, fewer farmers are needed on American farms than ever before. And yet, production on these farms, generally, continues to increase, thus providing for an ample supply of food.

Some of the key ideas, then, that pupils may develop in the unit "Living on the Farm" would be the following:

1. Change is going on continuously in the area of farming in the United States. Pupils will study changes in other aspects of American society when different units in social studies are taught. (History)

2. Farmers are interdependent with other members in American society and the world. Machinery, equipment, building needs, and personal wants and necessities, among other items, are purchased by the farmer whereas an outlet for what he/she produces is obtained through processors and producers in American society and in the world. (Economics)

3. There are many more consumers of farm products than there are producers of these products. (Economics)

4. The climate and kind of soil will guide in determining the kinds of crops that can be grown in different areas of the United States. (Geography)

If units in social studies cannot be justified adequately, they should definitely not be taught. With the vast amount of knowledge that is available in the social sciences, a major problem exists in selecting important units to teach in elementary school social studies. In many ways, the section in the resource unit pertaining to "Justification for

Teaching the Unit," relates directly to the objectives section which will now be discussed.

3. The objectives of the unit. A resource unit contains, among other things, more objectives than a given class of pupils can realize. Social studies teachers need to select those which are attainable and provide for individual differences. Pupils in a school may be grouped homogeneously in terms of fast, average, and slow learners. Or, they can be grouped heterogeneously thus providing for a considerable range of achievement within a class. Teachers must have much information about their pupils such as interests, home background, achievement, capacity, and health in order to select objectives intelligently for a given group of pupils. The total pupil needs to realize optimum achievement; thus all three categories of objectives - understandings, skills, and attitudes - must be emphasized.

A resource unit for upper grade pupils entitled "Living in the Middle East" could, among others, contain the following general objectives:

To develop within the pupil an understanding that

a. Ancient Israel reached its highest level of development under the reign of King David and King Solomon with Jerusalem being the capital city.

b. the Arabs in 632 A.D. became increasingly united with the Moslem religion and established a large Empire which included, among other areas, the Middle East, North Africa, Spain, a part of France, and a part of India.

c. the Middle East later was under the rule of the Ottoman Empire (1517-1917) and the British Mandate (1917-1948).

d. the United Nations voted for a partition plan for Palestine in 1947 to divide the land between the Jews and the Arabs.

e. dissatisfaction of the partition plan resulted in four Arab-Israeli Wars in 1948.

f. Israel became a nation in 1948 while the rest of Palestine (the West Bank) became a part of the Hashemite Kingdom of the Jordan.

g. the Arab-Israeli War of 1967 changed previously designed borders. Israel captured the Golan Heights from Syria, as well as the West Bank from the Hashemite Kingdom of the Jordan.

Among the skills that could be developed within pupils may be the following:

a. Utilizing the author, subject, title, and cross reference cards in the card catalogue to locate appropriate library books.

b. Using encyclopedias to gather needed information.

c. Reading content with meaning and understanding from several series of social studies texts.

d. Developing an outline of content read.

e. Drawing and finding pictures relating directly to the outline.

f. Presenting information clearly and accurately to the class.

g. Working harmoniously with others in class, school, and society.

The following, among others, would be examples of desirable attitudes that may be developed within pupils:

a. Appreciating contributions of nations of the Middle East.

b. Wanting to solve problems and disagreements peacefully that exist between and among nations.

c. Appreciating problem solving activities in the social studies.

d. Wanting to learn more about the Middle East.

e. Wanting to evaluate the contributions of others in terms of desirable standards or criteria.

f. Respecting classmates and their contributions.

The teacher needs to select objectives carefully that pupils are to realize in elementary school social studies. The social studies textbook alone must not determine these objectives. Too frequently this has been true when teachers have largely used the confines of a textbook to determine objectives in teaching social studies. Pupils who do not read well may gain very little from ongoing units of study. Those pupils who achieve well above their present grade level in reading may become bored in this outdated approach in teaching social studies. Reading content is only one learning activity, among many, in ongoing units of study. The teacher must individualize instruction to provide for individual differences in the classroom. Careful thought must be given to the value and worth of each objective. When pupils realize desired objectives, they should become informed citizens who can identify important problems and work toward their solution in school and society.

An important concept to utilize when writing objectives is the word "balance." Some kind of balance needs to exist among understandings, skills, and attitudes. If objectives emphasizing attitudes were not stressed in teaching-learning situations, pupil achievement in the social studies would go downhill. This would hinder pupils in liking the curriculum area of social studies and thus keep these learners from realizing relevant understandings and skills objectives. It is difficult to separate objectives dealing with attitudes from understandings and skills since one category of objectives affects the other categories. Balance in these three categories of objectives would not mean that the same number of outcomes would need to be stressed in

each of the domains. For example, a particular social studies unit may emphasize more of construction work, art activities, and reading activities, as compared to other units; thus an adequate number of skills objectives would need to be written and emphasized in teaching and learning. When pupils are successful in interesting and purposeful construction work, art activities, and reading activities, attitudes may then also improve. This would aid pupils then in realizing attitudinal objectives.

Objectives should always be adjusted to present achievement levels of individual pupils. Certainly, the social studies teacher should not select objectives that are too difficult for a learner to realize. Nor, in the other extreme, should objectives be selected by the teacher which a learner has already realized. If objectives are selected which are excessively difficult to realize, pupils, generally, will not learn to like social studies as a curriculum area. They will thus, in many cases, not develop needed understandings, skills, and attitudes. If objectives have already been realized by the learner prior to the teaching of a unit, minimal new learnings only, will be developed by the pupil. Preassessing pupils before teaching a unit helps to eliminate objectives that are too difficult or too easy.

General objectives state what kinds of individuals teachers are attempting to develop during the time a unit is taught or for a longer period of time. Objectives pertain to what is valued highly in society. Certain objectives are prized more highly as compared to others. Value judgments based on knowledge must be made to determine which objectives pupils should realize.

Teachers of social studies need to select important general objectives carefully for a resource unit which individual pupils in a class may realize during the time a unit is taught. Specific objectives can be developed from the stated general objectives.

Specific objectives are important to emphasize when developing teaching units and lesson plans for a class of pupils. Teaching units and lesson plans will be discussed later.

Specific objectives state the type or kind of behavior the child is to exhibit as a result of teaching a lesson or several lessons. The teacher can be reasonably certain that each pupil has realized specific objectives; there is little room for interpretation of the meaning of these kinds of objectives. A vague objective, as an example, could be the following: "The pupil is to understand World War II." Many different interpretations of the meaning of this objective may result. For example, what is the pupil to understand about World War II? There certainly is a vast amount of information written about World War II. Various interpretations could be given of what pupils are to learn in the preceding vague objective. The pupil would generally reveal through an act or a product of an act that a specific objective has been realized. The teacher can then determine if pupils have realized the specific objective or objectives. The teacher, in other words, could not evaluate if pupils have realized the previously stated objective pertaining to "the pupil is to understand World War II." Certainty must exist in the teacher's mind that a goal has been realized by the pupil when referring to specific objectives. Teachers, basically, should be able to agree in degrees that the exhibited behavior of the pupil

reveals with certainty that a specific objective has been realized. The following would be an example of a specific objective: "The child will list in writing three causes of World War II." After ample, appropriate learning activities have been provided in the classroom, the teacher can evaluate the effectiveness of his or her teaching by having pupils write three causes of World War II. If they list more than three causes, this is better yet. Provisions must be made for individual differences in the classroom. Each pupil should realize stated objectives.

Different levels of complexity exist, for example, in objectives pertaining to the cognitive domain. Cognitive objectives pertain to the use of the intellect. Contrast the following specific objectives:

(a) The pupil will list in writing four modern machines used in farming.

(b) The pupil will write two uses for each of four modern machines used in farming.

The first objective requires the pupil to recall facts. There are many important facts for pupils to learn meaningfully and to retain. Different types or kinds of thinking require the use of facts. The teachers must guard against having pupils learn facts which are unimportant and irrelevant. With the explosion of knowledge as a trend in society, it is important to select content carefully when teaching pupils. The second objective goes beyond the mere recalling of facts. A more complex level of thinking is involved here whereby the pupil is to go beyond recalling the names of four modern machines used in farming; he or she is also to tell how each machine is used in farming. Teachers must have pupils realize objectives which go beyond that of mere recall of facts. In addition to the two levels of cognitive

objectives listed above, pupils should also be able to transfer learnings to new situations, to think critically, to develop a hypothesis or hypotheses when engaging in problem solving activities, and to engage in evaluating content.

Specific objectives dealing with the psychomotor domain will now be discussed. In this domain the use of the muscles or eye-hand coordination is involved. If pupils are studying a unit on the farm, they could construct, among other items, a model farm house, barn, silo, and cattle shed. As further examples, pupils with teacher guidance in studying a unit on Australia may develop a frieze pertaining to the following scenes: a cattle station, a sheep station, a desert area, and an urban scene. A specific objective in the psychomotor domain pertaining to a unit on the Middle Ages may emphasize the following: "The pupil will construct a model castle using a cardboard box, scissors, and tempera paint." To realize this objective, a variety of learning activities must be provided. Proper sequence of the learning activities is important. The pupil could observe numerous castles through viewing and discussing pictures, a filmstrip, slides, a film, and reading content about castles. Ultimately, the pupil must exhibit behavior whereby it can be determined that he/she can construct the model castle as stated in the objective.

Specific objectives pertaining to the affective domain deal with feelings, attitudes, and appreciations that pupils have. As was stated earlier, this category of objectives is of utmost importance since it influences achievement in the area of understandings and skills or in the cognitive and psychomotor domain. If pupils are studying a unit on

the farm, positive attitudes should be developed toward the farmer and farming in providing needed food and fiber in American society. When studying a unit on Canada, pupils may develop an attitude of respect and appreciation for harmonious relationships between that country and the United States. Also, an appreciation for the high standard of living and democratic form of government in Canada should be developed and/or maintained by pupils. Appreciating the contributions of Black Americans such as George Washington Carver, Thurgood Marshall, Martin Luther King, Jr., Ralph Bunche, and Edward Brooke, would also relate to objectives stressing the affective domain. These objectives should be precise and specific so that teachers generally agree as to their meaning. In studying a unit on Australia, the following would be a specific objective pertaining to the affective domain: "The pupil will voluntarily select and read a library book on Australia, ultimately reporting his or her findings to three other learners in a committee." To realize this specific objective, the teacher could briefly introduce or review several library books to pupils. Hopefully, pupils will voluntarily read a book of their own choosing and report findings to committee members. Numerous other approaches may be utilized to evaluate if the pupil has comprehended the contents well, such as conducting a conference with the learner to determine comprehension. The pupil, for example, could answer correctly three out of four questions asked covering the content of the library book.

4. Possible questions and problems for pupils to solve. In American society it is important for individuals to identify problems and have possible solutions to these problems. In the social studies

curriculum, pupils must have ample opportunities to engage in problem solving activities. For problem solving to occur, the problem must be carefully identified and delimited. Once this task has been completed, information or data can be gathered to develop a hypothesis (or hypotheses) in answer to the problem. Further study and thought can help in testing the hypothesis or hypotheses.

It is important to have a section in the resource unit which is devoted to possible questions and problems for pupils to solve as the unit progresses. In a unit pertaining to the Middle East, the following problems or questions, among others, may be important for pupils to solve:

a. How did the Balfour Declaration assist in establishing the state of Israel?

b. How did the United Nations plan of 1947 for partitioning Palestine affect both the Jews and the Arabs?

c. What were possible causes for the Arab-Israeli Wars of 1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973?

d. Which factors are keeping the present Middle East conflict from being resolved?

5. Learning activities for pupils. The teacher must select learning activities which will guide learners to realize objectives. Each pupil must achieve important attainable objectives. Learning activities should be selected whereby pupils may feel successful in achieving new objectives.

When starting a social studies unit, the teacher must develop within pupils readiness to benefit adequately from new learning activities provided in proper sequence. The social studies curriculum

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will need to be adjusted to each pupil in the class. Teachers must work in the direction of getting pupils actively involved in a variety of interesting learning activities pertaining to the ongoing unit. Too frequently, a teacher has been enthused in a unit that is taught, but enthusiasm for learning has been lacking on the part of children. It is necessary to evaluate the learning activities continuously which are provided for pupils to determine if individual differences within a class are being provided for. Selected learning activities may be used to initiate, develop, or culminate a unit.

6. Evaluating the achievement of pupils. The teacher wants to determine if pupils have realized stated objectives. To indicate if objectives have been realized, evaluation is necessary. Not all evaluation techniques will assess pupils in the same facet of development. For example, a paper-pencil test carefully developed by the teacher may measure pupil achievement in having gained important facts, concepts, and generalizations. However, pupil achievement in general intellectual development cannot be evaluated using sociometric devices. The sociometric device may be utilized, among other evaluation techniques, to assess pupils in social development.

Each evaluation technique has strengths and weaknesses. Thus, a variety of techniques needs to be utilized. For example, the social studies teacher through observation may feel that certain pupils are not making progress in ongoing units of study until comparisons are made of work samples of each pupil, such as written reports, in comparing individual present with earlier achievement levels.

7. The bibliography section. In this section, the social studies teacher may find a listing of resources for his or her own personal use. This list would include, for example, professional books and magazines which the teacher finds helpful in teaching social studies. The bibliography should also contain a listing of materials for pupils to utilize such as library books, films, tapes, filmstrips, slides, textbooks, pictures, and models.

Naylor and Diem[9] wrote:

> Unit plans are basically of two varieties: the resource unit and the teaching unit. The resource unit is the collection of materials related to the focus of the teaching unit. It includes background material (e.g., books and articles related to the content of the teaching unit; books, articles, handouts, lesson plans, and other material related to ideas for teaching an aspect of the unit) as well sa photographs, articles, films, and filmstrips, and other resources the teacher may find useful in teaching the unit. Maintaining resource units of this type provides an invaluable aid for developing specific teaching units.

Teaching Units

Developing good teaching units should help to improve the social studies curriculum. A teaching unit generally pertains to planning for instructing a specific class of pupils for an entire unit. The resource unit which was discussed previously might be utilized directly to develop the teaching unit. A teaching unit is used to teach a specific class of students whereas the resource unit contains a collection of more objectives, learning activities, evaluation techniques, and bibliography entries than can possibly be used in teaching a given class

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[9] David T. Naylor and Richard A. Diem. Elementary and Middle School Social Studies. New York: Random House, 1987, page 101.

of learners. Thus the resource unit provides valuable suggestions from which the teaching unit may be developed.

Several formats exist which may serve as guidelines for developing teaching units. The following format can be used as a guideline in developing the appropriate sections of a teaching unit:

1. Specific objectives
2. Pretesting of pupils
3. Possible revision of objectives
4. Learning activities to realize objectives
5. Evaluation to determine if objectives have been realized

1. Specific objectives. The teacher must select with much care important specific objectives which a class of pupils may realize. The specific objectives are carefully selected in that they can be achieved by pupils in a class and represent significant objectives, according to teacher judgment. The objectives should be specific so that the teacher may ascertain after instruction if they have been achieved by learners. Thus the teacher may evaluate if these objectives have been attained.

2. Pretesting of pupils. The teacher must evaluate the present level of achievement of pupils individually. Certainly, the teacher does not want to teach that which pupils cannot learn. Nor, in the other extreme, does the teacher want to teach that only, which makes for review and repetition on the part of learners. New learnings then would not be developed by pupils.

The teacher of social studies must use appropriate evaluation techniques which will assist in determining where pupils are presently in achievement. The evaluation is based directly upon the stated

specific objectives. One objective, among others, may have been the following pertaining to a unit on Mexico: "The pupil will list four leading farm products produced on farms in Mexico." Through a discussion, as an example, the teacher can determine if the objective has already been realized and needs to be adjusted upward for learners. Perhaps, learners lacked background knowledge of Mexico and the objective needs to be modified to an easier level. It, of course, is also possible that objectives do not need to be modified, revised, or changed, as a result of the pretest. Diverse techniques may be utilized to preassess learner progress. Quality discussions conducted by the teacher might well reveal pupil achievement as a pretest.

3. Possible revision of objectives. Through evaluation of present levels of pupil achievement pertaining to the new unit which is to be taught, the teacher receives valuable information about the necessity of leaving the objectives as they were or revising them. It is highly recommended that some type or kind of pretest be given so that specific objectives can be revised, if necessary. Each pupil then has objectives which may be realized. The curriculum is thus adjusted to the present levels of pupil achievement. Learners can then be successful in achieving to their highest level possible when realizing attainable objectives. Pertaining to a taxonomy of educational objectives, Arends[10] lists the diverse levels of cognition of Bloom's classification:

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[10] Richard I. Arends, Learning to Teach. First edition. New York: Random House, 1988, page 279.

Level 1: Knowledge -- the student can recall define, recognize, or identify specific information presented during instruction. The information may be in the form of a fact, a rule, a diagram, a sound, and so on.

Level 2: Comprehension -- The student can demonstrate understanding of information by translating it into a different form or by recognizing it in translated form. This can be through giving a definition in his or her own words, summarizing, giving an original example, recognizing an example, etc.

Level 3: Application -- The student can apply the information in performing concrete actions. These actions may involve figuring, writing, reading, handling equipment, etc.

Level 4: Analysis -- The student can recognize the organization and structure of a body of information, can break this information down into its constituent parts, and can specify the relationships between these parts.

Level 5: Synthesis -- The student can bring to bear information from various sources to create a product uniquely his or her own. The product can take a variety of forms -- written, oral, pictorial, etc.

Level 6: Evaluation -- The student can apply a standard in making a judgment on the worth of something, a concerto, an essay, an action, an architectural design, etc.

4. Learning activities to realize objectives. The teacher must think of the concept "variety" when evaluating possible learning activities for pupils. The learning activities should assist pupils to realize specific objectives. Learning activities must point directly toward having learners achieve objectives.

The social studies teacher should also think of proper sequence for learners when providing a variety of learning activities. A good rule to follow would be to move from the simple to the complex when teaching pupils. Proper sequence from the child's point of view is very important. The teacher can provide learning activities which are too difficult for students; learners then would lose out on important

subject matter due to complexity of content and ideas being presented. With good sequence in ongoing learning activities, pupils should progress continuously. To initiate a unit, the teacher, for example, could show a film which would provide an overview of the entire unit to pupils. The film would be on the understanding level of learners. The contents of the film should be thoroughly discussed with active involvement on the part of pupils. Following this learning activity, the overhead projector could be used to provide further related learning activities. Perhaps, the involved transparency clarified ideas which were developed from the preceding learning activity involving the film. A discussion of content pertaining to the transparency should assist pupils in developing concepts, principles, and generalizations in greater depth. Other learning activities in sequence may pertain to the use of a filmstrip, pictures, a tape, and drawings to further enhance pupil learning. Meaningful discussions should be a definite part of each presentation. Learning activities provided for pupils should help extend their thinking when moving from the simple to the complex. Additional learning activites provided for pupils may assist learners to develop gradually more complex responses on their own unique achievement levels.

Learning activities should guide pupils to achieve specific objectives in the teaching unit. In a unit pertaining to the Middle East, the teacher may have written the following specific objective for pupils to realize: "The pupil will write four generalizations pertaining to the Balfour Declaration." The teacher's task now is to provide learning activities which will assist pupils to realize the

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specific objective. Proper sequence in learning activities is important which guides pupils to progress continuously in realizing desired objectives.

5. Evaluation to determine if objectives are being realized. The teacher must be certain that specific objectives have been achieved by pupils. The way to determine if objectives have been realized is through evaluation. Appropriate techniques of evaluation then must be utilized by the teacher to decide if learners have achieved specific objectives. Teachers should assess pupils at the end of a social studies unit to notice if objectives have been realized. They should also determine at various intervals when the social studies unit is being taught whether specific objectives are being achieved. Evaluation of pupil achievement must be a continous process. Additional learning activities should be provided for pupils when specific objectives have not been acquired at different intervals during the time the unit is taught.

Lesson Plans

A carefully developed plan for each day in teaching social studies can do much to improve the curriculum. A lesson plan pertains to a specific day in teaching social studies. The teacher may, of course, not follow the lesson plan completely for a particular day of teaching social studies if feedback from learners during class sessions reveals that different learning activities need to be provided than those suggested in the plan. However, each day's learning activities in the social studies should be planned in detail in a lesson plan. Careful

planning by the teacher is important in helping develop confidence for success in teaching.

The teaching unit discussed previously may be utilized directly in getting ideas for developing a lesson plan. There are different plans or formats for developing lesson plans. The following model may be used in writing the necessary parts of a lesson plan:

1. Specific objectives
2. Learning activities
3. Evaluation techniques

1. Specific objectives. There are, of course, carefully selected specific objectives which learners can achieve for a certain class session that is devoted to teaching social studies. Learners must realize new significant attainable objectives if they are going to develop as well as possible intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically. The objectives realized by learners for a specific class session in social studies should relate to general objectives which would be achieved over longer periods of time for pupils such as during the time a unit is taught or for the entire school year.

2. Learning activities. To realize specific objectives for a given session devoted to teaching social studies, careful selection of learning activities is important. The learning activities that have been selected should definitely help pupils to realize the stated objectives. The learning activities should have proper sequence so that learners may achieve continuous progress.

Dobkin, Fischer, Ludwig, and Koblinger[11] wrote:

> Specific learning activities run the entire gamut of social studies skills and might involve activities such as:
>
> 1. Reading from a text and responding in writing to a series of pivotal questions.
> 2. Constructing "pro" and "con" arguments on a controversial question.
> 3. Translational skills, such as map, chart, graph, picture interpretation.
> 4. Short-essay writing.
> 5. Brief opinion surveys with analysis and interpretation.
> 6. Viewing and interpreting a filmstrip.
> 7. Listening and reacting to a recording.

3. Evaluation techniques. The teacher must select appropriate evaluation techniques to determine if pupils have realized specific objectives for a given lesson in elementary school social studies. The technique to utilize in evaluating pupil achievement pertaining to learnings obtained from a class session devoted to social studies must be selected carefully. Teacher observation of pupil achievement may be adequate to determine if specific objectives have been achieved for a particular lesson in social studies. Observations made by the teacher can be recorded and compared with other observations made. On other days, additional techniques of evaluation may be used such as a teacher-made test. The evaluation technique that is used should guide the teacher in determining if pupils have realized specific objectives. In studying a unit on Argentina, for example, pupils at the appropriate stage of readiness may realize the following objective for a specific lesson: "The pupil will list in writing in order of importance four

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[11] William S. Dobkin, Joel Fischer, Bernard Ludwig, and Richard Koblinger. A Handbook for the Teaching of Social Studies. Second edition. Boston, London, Sydney, Toronto: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1985, page 70.

manufactured products of Argentina." The objective states the technique or approach that will be utilized to evaluate pupil achievement.

Oliva[12] wrote:

> We need to know whether a program is working or not. We need to evaluate the following in additon to subject matter achievement of students in each discipline and grade:
>
> a. curriculum goals and objectives
> b. instructional goals and objectives
> c. specific programs, in both formative stage and at the end of a trial period
> d. student reactions to the curriculum
> e. parents' and other laypersons' reactions to the curriculum
> f. teachers' reactions to the curriculum
> g. the general effectiveness of the school's program
> h. the quality and effectiveness of curriculum materials
> i. the organization of the curriculum
> j. the process for curriculum development and its effectiveness
> k. projections for the future
> l. the evaluation program itself

Scope in the Social Studies

An important problem in developing the social studies curriculum is to determine scope. Scope pertains to the breadth of content or units taught in the social studies curriculum. There are several ways to determine the scope of elementary school social studies.

An outdated approach in determining scope would allow a series or several series of textbooks utilized on different grade levels to determine the social studies curriculum. The teacher, in this situation, teaching social studies would rely upon these textbooks to determine which units are to be taught. By looking at the table of

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[12] Peter F. Oliva. Supervision for Today's Schools. Second Edition. New York: Longman, Inc., 1984, page 302.

contents of social studies textbooks being used in an elementary school, one can, of course, tell the titles of units that will be taught. Social studies textbooks can provide information in helping to determine the scope of the curriculum. Textbooks, however, should not be the sole determiners in determining what is to be taught in social studies.

A second approach in determining the scope of elementary school social studies pertains to involved teachers, supervisors, and principals identifying important generalizations that pupils should realize in each of the units to be taught. Adequate time must be given in identifying these significant generalizations. Selected generalizations may pertain to a specific unit only. Others will relate to different units taught in the social studies. If pupils are to study a unit on dairy farming, the following generalizations, among others, could be identified which pupils then may acquire:

1. Strict standards must be followed by dairy farmers who sell milk for human use.

2. Milk is not touched by human hands as it moves from the cow being milked to a bulk milk tank.

3. The use of machines has eliminated much of the heavy manual labor formerly performed by dairy farmers.

4. Individuals in society, including dairy farmers, are interdependent.

A third approach in determining the scope of social studies pertains to specialists in the social sciences identifying key structural ideas which pupils could then realize inductively with teacher guidance. Specialists in history, geography, anthropology, sociology, political science, and economics may help determine major ideas that pupils should develop. These key ideas could be emphasized

throughout the elementary school years when different units in social studies are taught. Professors from local or nearby colleges and universities may assist in determining which major ideas from the social sciences should be emphasized in different specific units in elementary school social studies.

Perhaps, the best suggestion that could be made for determining scope in elementary school social studies would be to use what is salient from the three approaches discussed previously. Certainly, social scientists from the different areas of the social sciences have valuable contributions to make in determining what is to be taught in elementary school social studies. These sources for determining scope in elementary school social studies can be evaluated by those involved in developing the social studies curriculum such as teachers, supervisors, and principals. Active involvement is necessary by participants when determining the scope of the social studies curriculum. Pupils must be guided to become proficient in critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, and desirable attitudes when thinking of developing the scope of the curriculum.

Sequence in Social Studies

Sequence in social studies pertains to answering the question of when units should be taught. For example, when should units on the home, school, and pets be taught? In many cases, units such as these will be taught on the first grade level. The assumption has been that the home, school, and pets are in the immediate environment of young children thus making for adequate background content and readiness for

learning. There are exceptions, of course, to this statement. The teacher can provide background learnings for those pupils who lack the necessary prerequisites.

On the second grade level pupils may study units on the neighborhood and city, generally. In other words, the child is studying units which are further removed from his/her immediate environment in the second grade. By the time the pupil is in the intermediate grades he/she is studying units which are further removed from the immediate environment. The pupil in the intermediate grades may be studying units on Latin America, Mexico, and American history on the fifth grade level as well as units on Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia on the sixth grade level.

There is a major question that can be raised pertaining to units commonly taught on the primary grade levels. This question pertains to what is close or in the immediate environment of the child. Children on the first grade level, then, should have ample opportunities to learn about homes in the United States as well as in a few selected foreign countries. The "far away" has been brought close to elementary school pupils due to better methods of communication as well as transportation.

It is important to teach units in depth rather than using the survey approach. Thus, teachers, supervisors, and administrators should select, perhaps, eight or nine units to be taught in a given school year on the intermediate grade levels. Too frequently, the number of units taught in a given school year has been excessive. Pupils then have not attached meaning to the ongoing unit. Perhaps, learners developed generalizations based on inadequate information since the teacher tried

to cover too many units in the survey approach to teaching social studies.

There are several questions which should be answered pertaining to sequence of units on the different grade levels in the elementary school.

1. Which units are on the understanding level, in general, for pupils of a particular age level?

2. Can adequate readiness be developed within pupils to attach meaning to the contents of a new unit?

3. Will the unit be of interest to pupils in a particular class?

4. Are pupils mature enough to develop purpose for studying a particular unit?

5. Are adequate materials available for each social studies unit in order that learning activities may be varied and thus provide for individual differences?

Orlich, et al.[28] wrote:

> Gagne began to study the sequence in which the learning activities (teaching) were planned. He soon concluded that some instructional elements should have preceded others and that some concepts that he had not taught the students should have been introduced prior to attempting the particular learning objective. This initial study led Gagne to rearrange some of the learning sequences and to try the lesson again. As a result, there was a dramatic change in student success as measured by test results. The concomitant learning of experiences were arranged in a chartlike format, so that the top of the chart contained the end of the instructional sequence, usually called the terminal objective. Those objectives below the terminal objective are called

[13] Donald C. Orlich, et al. Teaching Strategies - A Guide to Better Instruction. Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1985, page 56.

intermediate or entry-level objectives. The terminal objective is what the students finally should achieve after a series of planned instructional encounters.

Problems for Consideration and Discussion

1. Read several periodical articles from educational journals dealing with objectives in elementary school social studies. What agreements as well as disagreements, exist on objectives that pupils should realize in the social studies, according to these writers?

2. Survey the objectives that writers of several series of elementary school social studies textbooks recommend in the teacher's manual section. Which objectives did these writers agree upon? Disagree?

3. Interview three teachers of elementary school social studies about objectives they have pupils realize. Contrast the information from the interview with that of problems one and two above.

4. Select several textbooks on teaching elementary school social studies and summarize the objectives which pupils are to realize.

5. Contrast the objectives from your summary in problem four with social studies objectives listed in several city school or state curriculum guides.

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